

CLAIMS

1. A method of accessing a content site comprising the steps of:

5 (a) receiving a sound-sequence signal representing a sound sequence with sound features that serve to encode characters according to a predetermined scheme, at least some of the sound sequences encoding character sequences that comprise site codes intended to be translated to a content site URI by a service system;

(b) decoding the received sound-sequence signal to derive a character sequence;

10 (c) where the character sequence derived in step (b) includes a said site code, sending the site code to the service system for translation; and

(d) receiving back from the service system the content site URI corresponding to said site code, and using it to access the content site.

15 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the derived character sequence includes the URI of the service system.

3. A method according to claim 2, wherein the URI of the service system is a URL.

20 4. A method according to claim 1, wherein the derived character sequence includes two groups of characters, one of which constitutes said site code and the other of which serves to indicate that the said one group is a site code to be translated by said service system into a content site URI.

25 5. A method according to claim 4, wherein the said other group of characters comprises the URI of the service system.

6. A method according to claim 5, wherein the URI of the service system is a URL

30 7. A method according to claim 4, wherein the nature of the sound features and of the predetermined encoding scheme is such that a sound sequence of a musical character represents said one group of characters.

8. A method according to claim 4, wherein the nature of the sound features and of the predetermined encoding scheme is such that a sound sequence of a musical character represents said other group of characters.

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9. A method according to claim 1, wherein in step (b) said sound features are decoded into corresponding sound codewords which are then mapped to characters.

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the sound features comprise one of:

10 - fixed-frequency tones or tone combinations;
- occurrence of maximum sound output power in predetermined frequency bands;
- changes in output frequency;
- different modulation frequencies of one or more tones.

15 11. A method according to claim 1, wherein the steps of the method are carried out by a voice browser.

12. A method according to claim 1, including the further step of caching the correspondence of site code to site URI, step (c) involving checking this cache before
20 contacting the service system.

13. A method according to claim 1, wherein the content site URI is a URL.

14. Apparatus for accessing a content site comprising the steps of:

25 - first means for receiving a sound-sequence signal representing a sound sequence with sound features that serve to encode characters according to a predetermined scheme, at least some of the sound sequences encoding character sequences that comprise site codes intended to be translated to a content site URI by a service system;
- second means for decoding the received sound-sequence signal to derive a character sequence;
30 - third means operative where the character sequence derived by the second means includes a said site code, to send the site code to the service system for translation; and

- fourth means for receiving back from the service system the content site URI corresponding to said site code, and using it to access the content site.

15. Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the derived character sequence includes the 5 URI of the service system, the third means being operative to extract this URI and use it to contact the service system.

16. Apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the URI of the service system is a URL.

10 17. Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the derived character sequence includes two groups of characters, one of which constitutes said site code and the other of which serves to indicate that the said one group is a site code to be translated by said service system into a content site URI, the third means being responsive to the presence of said other group of characters to send the said one group of characters to the service system for translation.

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18. Apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the said other group of characters comprises the URI of the service system, the third means being operative to take this URI and use it to contact the service system.

20 19. Apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the URI of the service system is a URL

20. Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein only some of the sound sequences encode site codes, the third means including means for determining the presence of a site code in the derived character sequence.

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21. Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the third means is arranged to operate on the basis that all sound sequences encode site codes.

30 22. Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the second means comprises means for decoding said sound features into corresponding sound codewords and means for mapping these codewords to characters.

23. Apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the sound features comprise one of:

- fixed-frequency tones or tone combinations;
- occurrence of maximum sound output power in predetermined frequency bands;
- changes in output frequency;
- 5 - different modulation frequencies of one or more tones.

24. Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the apparatus is a voice browser.

25. Apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising a cache for caching previously-

10 determined correspondences between site codes and site URIs, the third means being operative, in response to the presence of a site code in the received sound sequence, to check the cache and only send the site code to the service system where the cache does not hold a site-code to URI correspondence for that site code.

15 **26.** Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the content site URI is a URL.

27. Apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising a microphone for receiving the sound sequence and providing a corresponding said sound-sequence signal to said means for receiving.